

GOOD NEWS!

CREATIVE VISION

Vince Pesce, Director/Choreographer and Jeremy Desmon, Book Adaptation

What is your vision for *Good News!*? Tell us about your inspirations.

VINCE PESCE: The Roaring Twenties. A time of prosperity, modernity, and lovely gals flapping their way into our hearts. The Jazz Age. *Good News!* is a prime example of this glorious time of new beginnings. Who wouldn't want to toy with such a delicious show filled with songs like "The Varsity Drag", "The Best Things in Life Are Free", "Button Up your Overcoat", and "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries"? Well, the good folks of the Goodspeed Opera House, Jeremy Desmon (who adapted the book), and I jumped at the chance to finesse this piece and make it relevant and exciting for the audience of today.

We focused on making these highly entertaining characters clear and believable while adding lots of comic hijinks. That's where Jeremy Desmon comes in. He has managed to create a book that is beaming with 1920s charm, lovable comical characters, and a romantic couple that is destined to be together. Jeremy has created the perfect storm—a book that is funny, allows us to break into dance without stopping the plot, and still remains sincere. We also managed to pull in a few "new" DeSylva, Brown & Henderson tunes never before used in the show ("If You Haven't Got Love" and "Here Am I, Broken-Hearted").

David Krane, our dance music arranger, came on board to create brand-new dance music that will knock your socks off. *Good News!* is loaded with dance, so it was important to get someone like David, who did the arrangements for the *Chicago* movie as well as many Broadway shows, to bring our vision to life. His sense of the period is unmatched and he has delivered a joyous, quirky, and sophisticated dance score. We're tapping, we're flapping... and we're doing a black bottom that will have you dancing in the aisles.

JEREMY DESMON: At its heart, *Good News!* is, and has always been, a youth-filled, high-kicking, old-fashioned musical comedy set amongst the college shenanigans of football players and flirty coeds. Although the impossibly tuneful songs of DeSylva, Brown & Henderson have proven timeless, the original book material was, at times, rather dated. My vision as an "adaptor" was simple: rejuvenate the storytelling and dialogue and humor, and rewrite it in such a way as to honor the original yet breathe new life into these incredible characters and remarkable songs.

If we've succeeded, my hope is that most audience members won't even realize they are watching a "revisal"—ideally, they'll leave the theatre laughing and humming the tunes just as audiences did on Broadway nearly a century ago.

Tell us about staging in this unique venue. What makes Goodspeed the perfect fit for this production?

VP: We need lightning-fast entrances and exits for this style of comedy, so the intimacy of the Opera House stage works perfectly. Also, the choreography is tight, kinetic, and joyous, and this venue allows us to deliver explosive 1920s dance while making the audience feel like they're a part of the action.

JD: Not only is the Opera House *stage* perfect for the show, the *people* of Goodspeed are the perfect caretakers of this gem. They have musicals running in their blood. They innately understand what it takes to respect and honor our musical theatre history, all the while having the guts and passion to reinvigorate this common legacy for our next generation of theatergoers. With *Good News!* "re-launching" at the Opera House, Goodspeed is helping re-introduce the songs of DeSylva, Brown & Henderson to audiences and artists who will be amazed by what they discover. I firmly believe there couldn't be a more perfect place for this production than Goodspeed!

Tell us what the audience can expect to see.

VP: We have a bright, colorful, and quirky set designed by Court Watson. Court's inspiration came from the colorful souvenir football programs of the time. High-style and artful images that pop out at you and give you a sense of what it's like to have been an excited spectator of the great game of football in 1927.

JD: And, of course, don't forget the dancing! With the wonderfully inventive Vince Pesce as director/choreographer, you just know you'll experience a high-energy evening filled with whimsy and wit and joy and athleticism, all serving the characters and story and infectious spirit of the show. I can't wait to share this incredible production with the Goodspeed audience.